

Town of Montville
Town Council
Public Hearing Minutes
Board of Education Budget
Wednesday, April 30, 2025
6:00 p.m. – Tyl Middle School Auditorium

1. Call to Order
- Chairperson May called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Roll Call
- Present were Councilors Caron, Jaskiewicz, Southard, Yuchniuk, and May. Also present were Finance Director Julie Chapman and Superintendent of Schools Dianne Vumback. Absent were Councilors Lathrop and Sabilia. Also absent was Mayor Leonard Bunnell, Sr.
4. Public Hearing

TOWN OF MONTVILLE
NOTICE OF BUDGET HEARINGS

Notice is hereby given that public hearings will be held at Tyl Middle School Auditorium,166 Chesterfield Road Oakdale, CT on April 30, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. on the Board of Education Budget and on May 1, 2025 at 6:00 p.m. on the General Government Budget for the Town of Montville for the fiscal year from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026.

Revenue Summary 2025-2026					
Description	2024 ACTUAL	2025 ADOPTED	2025 YTD	2026 DEPT.REQ.	2026 MAYOR PROP
PROPERTY TAXES	46,075,310	46,747,256	34,583,670	58,567,628	50,388,906
LICENSES & PERMITS	1,033,252	1,095,000	607,475	1,065,000	1,065,000
REVENUE USE MONEY/PROPERTY	1,192,355	960,000	712,085	750,000	800,000
REVENUE OTHER AGENCIES	255,732	249,000	104,238	259,000	259,000
STATE GRANTS SCHOOL	13,650,902	13,287,864	25,622	13,110,158	13,360,158
STATE GRANTS UNSPECIFIED	4,842,992	4,629,640	2,313,303	4,125,044	4,125,044
CHARGES FOR CURRENT SERVICES	544,834	452,000	369,154	451,700	451,700
MISC REVENUE	1,111,562	3,947,100	1,193,398	3,502,100	3,502,100
TOTAL REVENUES	68,706,938	71,367,860	39,908,945	81,830,630	73,951,908
Expenditure Summary 2025-2026					
Description	2024 ACTUAL	2025 ADOPTED	2025 YTD	2026 DEPT.REQ.	2026 MAYOR PROP
GENERAL GOVERNMENT	2,566,916	2,579,758	2,069,435	2,984,990	2,880,844
INTERGOV'T CONTRIBUTIONS	100,481	99,300	94,800	100,800	100,300
FRINGE BENEFITS/INSURANCE	5,799,265	6,052,000	5,320,238	6,515,895	6,645,895
DEBT SERVICE	5,108,365	3,691,339	2,971,678	3,389,935	3,389,935
LAND USE	358,423	441,475	235,871	490,870	444,670
HUMAN SERVICES	747,283	796,258	603,568	862,559	855,409
CULTURE AND RECREATION	363,263	390,390	291,280	407,241	398,841
PUBLIC SAFETY	6,606,573	6,302,808	5,536,139	7,081,545	6,291,557
PUBLIC WORKS	4,077,050	4,311,580	3,527,964	4,753,245	4,536,478
EDUCATION	42,042,817	44,883,851	27,504,650	47,277,114	46,601,620
CAPITAL	764,196	1,819,101	1,355,130	7,966,436	1,806,359
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	68,534,632	71,367,860	49,510,753	81,830,630	73,951,908

Detailed copies of the budget by department are available at the office of the Town Clerk or online at www.montville-ct.org.
Dated at Montville, Connecticut, this 21st day of April 2025.

Leonard Bunnell Sr.
Mayor

Tim May
Town Council Chairman

Julie Chapman
Finance Director

Chairperson May invited Superintendent of Schools Vumback to speak on the FY2025/26 Proposed Budget.

Superintendent of Schools Vumback welcomed and thanked everyone for attending this evening’s Public Hearing. She explained that 100% of the requested budget increase is due to educational mandates, fixed costs, contractual obligations, special education (SPED) tuition, buses, magnet schools, utilities, and other mandated expenses over which there is no discretion. The proposed 4.49% increase includes no new programming or initiatives;

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one (1) part-time SPED Para-Educator, per IEP (Individualized Education Program) requirements, and; a reduction of 4.5 Certified Teachers, 4 Uncertified Staff, and 7 non-tenured teachers, to comply with Connecticut State Statutes and deadlines. The Board of Education (BOE) is currently in Contract Negotiations with the Collective Bargaining Unit for contractual wages. Without additional funding, they will be forced to make decisions directly impacting the students, including eliminating existing programs, reducing staffing, or shifting costs to families. While grateful for the Mayor's proposed budget, which includes a 3% increase, it also results in a \$675,495.00 shortfall. She thanked those who attended a recent meeting between the Finance Committee and the School District to discuss and explore possible avenues to make up the funding difference, including the town's receipt of \$700,000.00, rather than the estimated \$450,000.00, for the state's Special Education Excess Cost Grant. She thanked the Leadership Team for their hard work, acknowledged the talented and dedicated teachers and staff, and stated the importance of maintaining their talented pool of individuals who make their schools thrive. She remains optimistic and believes in the strength of the team, who are united in their belief that education is a top priority in this community and that, working together, they will be able to find a path forward.

Chairperson May invited the members of the public to speak on the Mayor's FY2025/26 Proposed Budget.

A Montville Taxpayer and Parent expressed his support for the proposed BOE Budget. As an Executive Director for a Non-Profit Special Education (SPED) School and former Finance Director, he has a unique knowledge of SPED funding. Much of the proposed budget increase includes funding for SPED; cutting such support would be "folly", resulting in increased future expenses due to litigation or outplacements and tuitions. It is not only the right thing to do and fiscally responsible to fund these items, but also a legal requirement to provide free and appropriate education to all students. Investing in and internally supporting the children in such programs will serve current and future students.

Elementary School Teacher and Parent Kristy Feragne, who received one of the Pink Slips, expressed her support of the proposed BOE Budget and requested the Town Council reconsider the Mayor's proposed cut, which will impact both the teachers and the students on all levels.

Special Needs Para and Parent Laura Collar pleaded with the Town Councilors to "make the budget happen" and seek ways in which they could support the town's education, in general, and SPED program, in particular. The program is a very critical need that requires their support. Since her involvement with the program, she has been able to witness its progress and hopes that it will continue on that path.

Tom Grove, 9 Point Breeze Road, Uncasville, stated that the same conversations renew themselves year after year regarding the BOE Budget. He looks forward to the day the marching band marches in New York's Thanksgiving Day Parade. According to a U.S. News & World Report Study, the High School ranks higher than most of the schools in the region in terms of college preparation. He felt that they should consider those who are not college-bound and suggested establishing a special wing for the ROTC (Reserve Officers' Training Corps) Unit at the High School in collaboration with Electric Boat (EB) to help those students who are not college-bound. Metaphorically speaking, he viewed the BOE Budget as the Christmas Turkey and the remaining budget as the presents under the tree; it is important to fund the Christmas Turkey. Otherwise, the presents do not matter.

Teacher, Parent, and daughter of long-time Montville School System SPED teacher, Judy Miller, Becky Miller, 290 Chesterfield Road, Oakdale, felt that her mother would be upset

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by the District's SPED Program cuts. She requested they support the BOE Budget; it is the right thing to do.

Parent Justine DeLuca, 16 Cottonwood Lane, Uncasville, stated that her daughter is having an "amazing" experience as a Murphy Elementary School student. She commented on the dedicated, caring, and loving faculty and staff who make the best of their resources. She also spoke of her initial experiences during a PTO (Parent-Teacher Organization) meeting in which teachers and the librarian either requested or thanked the PTO for their support. She implored the leaders to support the BOE Budget, as presented, and thanked the Montville School Community and children who deserve better.

Parent, Former Murphy Elementary School Student-Teacher, and a 20-year veteran Teacher, Gretchen Brochu, 1605 Bozrah Road, Oakdale, expressed her support for the BOE Proposed Budget and her anger and disappointment with the number of teachers who are being cut, stating that their students and town deserve better. She and her husband grew up in and decided to raise their family in Montville, which, they felt, supported education and sought the best for its students. Over the past few years, their opinions have changed as they find themselves advocating for the full funding of their schools, which should be the town's main priority. By investing in their children, they are also investing in the future leaders of their town. Similarly, by investing in the families, they also invest in the future of Montville. Underfunding their public schools is unacceptable. As a teacher, she stated the daily challenges they face, including a lack of adequate supplies, para-educators, and administrative and behavioral support. Most of the increases are due to salary increases and benefits. She encouraged them to visit their public schools and witness, first-hand, the work of the teachers and staff. Issuing Pink Slips to excellent teachers, who are ingrained in the community and volunteer their time and efforts to its children, is devastating for the students and families. She implored them to do better. She cited the town's welcome sign, which states "Welcome to Montville; Proud of our Schools", and felt that they, like the families of Montville, should have pride in and support their schools. She asked them to stop cutting their education funding – they deserve much better.

Chairperson May asked three times if any additional members of the public would like to speak on the Mayor's Proposed Budget. There being none, he informed them that a very productive meeting was held with Superintendent Vumback and BOE Chairperson Wills Pike. He explained that the issuance of the Pink Slips was an unfortunate statutory requirement and informed the residents that unfunded state mandates have significantly reduced the town's revenue, adding that additional or reduced state funding is possible. He assured the residents that, together, they are working to create a positive path to move forward. He thanked the public for their comments and assured them of the Councilors' continued support for the schools and their united effort.

4. Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Jaskiewicz to adjourn the meeting at 6:23 p.m. Discussion: None. Voice vote, 5-0, all in favor. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by:

Agnes T. Miyuki, Recording Secretary for the Town of Montville

**AN AUDIO RECORD OF THE MEETING CAN BE FOUND ON THE TOWN'S
WEBSITE LOCATED UNDER RESOURCES – MEETING RECORDING**